



**For immediate release
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“Yurts” Camping Shelters Now Open at October Mountain State Forest

At October Mountain State Forest, campers now have an alternative to traditional pup tents and RVs: yurts.

Yurts – canvas-sided shelters that originated as dwellings in Mongolian nomadic culture – have become popular recreational camping accommodations. The three yurts opened today at October Mountain are equipped with beds, a dining table, wood flooring and inside lights, and can sleep up to six people.

Yurts are also an affordable overnight option for families and other groups at several other Department of Recreation and Conservation (DCR) parks: Shawme Crowell State Forest and Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod, as well as Otter River State Forest in Baldwinville. Water is available outside the yurts, and, while cooking is not allowed inside, campers can cook on the outdoor decks that serve as platforms for yurts. Campers bring their own linens, cooking equipment, and utensils.

“Yurts provide another camping opportunity in addition to DCR’s tent and RV campsites and cabins for people who want to get out into nature and enjoy the outdoors,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “One of the primary reasons for placing yurts here in the Berkshires is to provide affordable overnight accommodations for visitors coming to enjoy the many nearby cultural and historic attractions, such as Tanglewood, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival.”

With 16,500 acres, October Mountain is the largest state park in the Commonwealth. (The name “October Mountain” is attributed to writer Herman Melville, who loved his view of the hills in fall from his home in Pittsfield.) The park offers 46 campsites on a sunny hillside, as well as hiking, fishing, non-motorized boating, mountain biking, and trails for off-highway vehicles. The Appalachian Trail also cuts through the park.

Yurt camping costs (\$30 a night for a four-person yurt and \$40 a night for a six-person yurt) make it an affordable Berkshire lodging alternative. To make a camping reservation at October Mountain or any state park campground, call 877-I-CAMP-MA (877-422-6762) or visit www.reserveamerica.com.

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“These new yurts will provide hikers, mountain bikers, skiers, and other nature enthusiasts with convenient camping options as they explore October Mountain State Forest,” said State Senator Benjamin B. Downing (D-Pittsfield). “It’s great that DCR has provided this option for park visitors.”

Added Rep. William “Smitty” Pignatelli (D-Lenox), “The yurts, which have now become such popular accommodations for campers, will certainly enhance our already beautiful natural landscape of the largest state park in the Commonwealth, October Mountain State Forest.”

Massachusetts has 29 state park campgrounds, from Cape Cod to the Berkshires and many points in between. Eleven of those campgrounds are in the Berkshires: Beartown State Forest in Monterey, Clarksburg State Park in Clarksburg, D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen, Granville State Forest in Granville, Mohawk Trail State Forest in Charlemont, Mount Greylock State Reservation in Lanesborough, Pittsfield State Forest in Pittsfield, Savoy Mountain State Forest in Florida, Tolland State Forest in East Otis, and Windsor State Forest in Windsor. The only cabins in DCR campgrounds are in Mohawk Trail and Savoy Mountain state forests.

Joining more than a dozen states across the country, from Connecticut to California, Gov. Deval Patrick has declared June “Great Outdoors Month” across the Commonwealth, highlighting the state’s “proud legacy of parks, trails, and public lands” and recognizing that “biking, swimming, hiking, and other outdoor recreation promotes fitness and a healthy lifestyle.”

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